



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is responsible for providing nutrition assistance to low-income Americans and a safety net for the farm sector, and for conserving and preserving the Nation's forests and private agricultural lands. The President's 2024 Budget for USDA invests in: creating jobs and opportunity in rural communities; lowering energy costs for Americans; strengthening food supply chains and the nutrition safety net; supporting underserved farmers and producers; restoring America's advantage in agriculture; tackling the climate crisis while mitigating its ongoing impacts; and advancing environmental justice.

The Budget requests \$30.1 billion in discretionary budget authority for 2024, a \$3.8 billion or 14-percent increase from the 2023 enacted level, excluding Food for Peace Title II Grants, which are included in the State and International Programs total. Resources provided through the 2024 Budget complement investments in conservation, forest management, and broadband deployment provided in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act.

The President's 2024 Budget:

- **Supports a Strong Nutrition Safety Net.** The Budget provides \$7.1 billion for critical nutrition programs, including \$6.3 billion to fully fund the 6.5 million individuals expected to participate in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) for Women, Infants, and Children, which is critical to the health of pregnant women, new mothers, infants, and young children. This program helps low-income families put nutritious food on the table and addresses racial disparities in maternal and child health outcomes. The Budget also includes \$15 billion over 10 years to allow more States and schools to leverage participation in the Community Eligibility Provision to provide healthy and free school meals to an additional nine million children.
- **Builds and Protects a Fair and Resilient Food Supply Chain.** The Budget supports ongoing actions to develop more diverse, robust, and resilient local and regional supply chains by targeting funding to increase the production capacity among smaller producers, including continuing overtime user fee relief as established in the American Rescue Plan. The Budget complements these targeted investments by strengthening market oversight through the Agricultural Marketing Service to support fair markets and competitive meat and poultry product prices for American families and increasing safeguards against invasive pests and diseases through the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. These programs build on the pandemic and supply chain assistance funding in the American Rescue Plan to address COVID-19 pandemic-related vulnerabilities in the food system and create new market opportunities and good-paying jobs that promote a safe and healthy work environment. The Budget also provides an increase of \$102 million above the 2023 enacted level for the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) for a total of \$1.3 billion. This funding would enable

the hiring of more inspectors and public health veterinarians, which would help increase the strength and flexibility of FSIS to respond to market demands and provide safe and healthy food products.

- **Connects More Rural Americans to High-Speed, Affordable, and Reliable Internet.** The President is committed to ensuring that every American has access to broadband internet. Installing high-speed internet creates high-paying union jobs and strengthens rural economies, which leads to higher property values, increased job and population growth, lower unemployment rates, and new business formation. Reliable internet is also crucial for rural Americans to access healthcare services through telehealth. Building on the \$2 billion for USDA broadband programs provided in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for 2023, the Budget provides \$400 million for the ReConnect program, which provides grants and loans to deploy broadband to unserved areas, especially tribal areas. With the funding provided in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, USDA has provided nearly \$548 million to people living and working across 21 States and Territories, which is expected to expand access to 43,189 households.
- **Invests in the Wildland Firefighting Workforce.** The Budget ensures that no Federal firefighter would make less than \$15 an hour and invests in the wildland firefighting workforce at USDA and the Department of the Interior (DOI) through a new comprehensive and equitable compensation structure. The Budget also increases the size of the workforce at USDA and DOI and supports additional mental and physical health services for that workforce. Together, these efforts would help address long-standing recruitment and retention challenges. These investments, totaling \$316 million over the 2023 enacted level, would build on the historic reforms in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and ensure that the Forest Service receives the support it needs to continue meeting evolving mission demands, as both the frequency and intensity of catastrophic wildfires are expected to continue to increase due to climate change.
- **Reduces Catastrophic Wildfire Risk.** The Budget provides \$323 million to complement \$1.8 billion provided in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and \$1.6 billion provided in the Inflation Reduction Act for 2023 to support ongoing implementation of the 10-year *Wildfire Crisis Strategy*. These resources would increase the scale of hazardous fuel reduction and restoration treatments within high-risk “firesheds” as part of the Administration’s comprehensive, nationwide response to the threat of catastrophic wildfire to natural resources, communities, and infrastructure.
- **Increases Climate Resilience.** The Budget provides \$1.2 billion, \$208 million above the 2023 enacted level, to increase conservation adoption and farm income across privately owned land through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The Budget builds upon and supports the generational investments provided through the Inflation Reduction Act to increase the voluntary adoption of conservation practices that sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with agricultural production. Within the amount provided in the Inflation Reduction Act are funds to develop a system to quantify environmental impacts at the field level. This important effort supports a foundation for voluntary environmental services markets, complementing NRCS’s work by leveraging private and other non-Federal investments and providing additional income opportunities for America’s farmers. To implement these investments, NRCS would draw upon Federal, State, and private conservationists, hiring thousands of employees—creating good paying jobs throughout rural America. The Budget also proposes to make USDA’s cover crop pilot program permanent.

- **Lowers Energy Costs and Supports Building Clean Energy in Rural Communities.** Rural communities are critical to achieving the goal of 100 percent clean electricity by 2035. The Budget builds on the \$13 billion provided in the Inflation Reduction Act to reduce energy bills for families, expand clean energy, transform rural power production, and create thousands of good-paying jobs for people across rural America. The Budget provides \$30 million for grants and \$1 billion for loan guarantees for renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements for farmers and rural small businesses. The Budget also provides \$6.5 billion in authority for rural electric loans to support additional clean energy, energy storage, and transmission projects that would create good-paying jobs. In addition, the Budget includes \$15 million to support the creation of the Rural Clean Energy Initiative. This funding would provide critical technical assistance to rural electric providers and help to achieve the President's clean energy goals and ensure funding reaches rural areas.
- **Restores American Leadership in Agricultural Innovation and Research.** The People's Republic of China has become the largest funder of agricultural research and development (R&D) in the world, surpassing the United States and the European Union. The Budget restores American innovation in agriculture by providing a total of more than \$4 billion, a \$299 million increase above the 2023 enacted level, for agricultural research, education, and outreach. This includes \$370 million to increase capacity among historically underserved populations. The Budget provides \$7 billion for climate related funding, a \$2 billion increase over the 2023 enacted level. This amount includes \$612 million for the Department's core climate related R&D activities, which includes the impacts of weather and water cycle variations on soil, air, and water resources needed for agricultural production. In addition, the Budget invests in ensuring innovative products can come to market safely and efficiently with improved regulatory review.
- **Promotes Climate Resiliency and Reduces Housing Insecurity in Rural Communities.** Affordable housing has been a long-standing problem for low-income residents in rural communities, one that is exacerbated by low energy efficiency of the aging housing stock which means higher costs to families. To help address this, the Budget includes a new proposal to eliminate the existing low-income borrower penalty that requires individuals to repay subsidy costs for Single-Family Direct loans—a requirement that only exists for rural housing. The Budget also increases funding by \$331 million above the 2023 enacted level for USDA's multifamily housing programs. This initiative would allow the Administration to reduce rent burdens for low-income borrowers while also increasing the resiliency of rural housing to the impacts of climate change through a proposal to require energy and water efficiency improvements and green features in USDA's rural housing programs that include construction.
- **Supports the 2023 Farm Bill.** The Budget provides USDA with the staffing resources necessary to implement the 2023 Farm Bill. The Administration looks forward to working this year with the Congress, partners, stakeholders, and the public to identify shared priorities for the 2023 Farm Bill that positions USDA to seamlessly continue implementation and build on the historic legislative achievements of the first two years of the Administration. The 2023 Farm Bill is a crucial opportunity for American agriculture and rural America to transform the food and agricultural system from one that benefits a few to one that benefits many, while strengthening USDA's nutrition programs, which are among the most far-reaching tools available to improve the health and well-being of Americans. To advance the vision of agriculture and rural economies building opportunity from the bottom up and middle out, the Administration looks forward to working with the Congress to create opportunity and new revenue streams for American farmers, ranchers, and producers of all sizes through climate smart agriculture

and forestry, biobased products, renewable energy, local and regional food systems, and other value-added opportunities, while reducing the paperwork burden for Federal programs and achieving best in Government practices.

The Administration looks forward to working with the Congress to: support new and beginning farmers; shore up the Federal Government's commitment to agricultural research; address climate change through voluntary incentives to reduce climate risk and improvements to crop insurance; maintain a commitment to conservation programs and investments in clean energy; continue efforts on food loss and waste; and implement climate-smart agriculture and forestry actions to open new market opportunities and provide a competitive advantage for American producers—including small and historically underserved producers and early adopters. In addition, the Administration seeks to protect rural communities by exploring solutions related to chemical contaminations of crops, livestock, and water, along with strengthening biodefense and animal health and disease protection, in line with the 2022 *National Biodefense Strategy and Implementation Plan for Countering Biological Threats, Enhancing Pandemic Preparedness, and Achieving Global Security*. The 2023 Farm Bill is also a critical opportunity to ensure that the wealth created in rural America stays there and to empower rural communities with the tools necessary to advance their locally-led vision.

The 2023 Farm Bill is also an opportunity to make progress toward the goal of ensuring that all Americans have access to healthy, affordable food, as emphasized in the *Biden-Harris Administration's National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition and Health*. This is an important moment to reconsider strengthening cross enrollment capabilities across Federal assistance programs and eliminating barriers to food assistance for vulnerable groups. These barriers make it difficult for underserved groups to succeed, including low-income college students, individuals reentering society and seeking a second chance, youth who have aged out of foster care, kinship families, low-income individuals in the U.S. Territories, and SNAP recipients facing time limits. Rather than reducing obstacles to employment, research demonstrates that time limits on SNAP eligibility amplify existing inequities in food and economic security. Beyond removing barriers to food access, there is also the opportunity to make healthier choices easier by expanding food purchasing options, fruit and vegetable incentives, and local food procurement through Federal nutrition programs, including by building upon efforts already plotted by USDA. The Farm Bill reauthorization process is also an opportunity to strengthen program integrity to address new risks and vulnerabilities while ensuring that USDA can continue to support the needs of all eligible households.